

Remarks

These Remarks are in reply to the Office Action mailed April 1, 2009.

I. Summary of Examiner's Rejections

Prior to the Office Action mailed April 1, 2009, Claims 1-12 and 14-30 were pending in the Application. In the Office Action, Claims 1-4, 12, 14-23 and 25-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hanna et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,054,905, hereinafter Hanna) in view of Arnold (U.S. Patent No. 6,257,848) and further in view of Tsai (U.S. Patent No. 6,839,741). Claims 5-11, 24 and 29-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hanna in view of Arnold, in view of Tsai and further in view of Le Pennec et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2005/0076082, hereinafter Le Pennec).

II. Summary of Applicants' Amendment

The present Response hereby amends Claims 1, 5, 12 and 19, cancels Claims 4, 8 and 15, and adds new Claims 31-33, leaving for Examiner's present consideration Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-12, 14 and 16-33. Reconsideration of the Application in light of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

III. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 1

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define the embodiment therein. As amended, Claim 1 currently defines:

- 1. A method for processing electronic mail messages, the method comprising:
accepting an electronic mail message, the electronic mail message including a file attachment;
removing the file attachment from the electronic mail message;
storing the file attachment in an attachment location;
inserting a hyperlink in the message, the hyperlink associated with the attachment location, wherein the hyperlink causes submission of validation information to an attachment server storing the file attachment;*

embedding a security token into the electronic mail message, wherein the security token specifies a security credential that would be transmitted to the attachment server when said hyperlink is utilized by a browser;
receiving a retrieval request from a recipient of the electronic mail message; and
determining, based on the security token embedded in the electronic mail message, whether to allow access to the attachment by the recipient and allowing access to the attachment if said security credential is deemed acceptable; and
performing transduction on the file attachment by the attachment server prior to providing the file attachment to the recipient, wherein said transduction includes reducing the size of the attachment or streaming the attachment to said recipient; and
wherein reducing the size of the attachment includes one or more of: compressing the file attachment, generating a lower bandwidth version of the file attachment, and reducing the size or resolution of an image in the file attachment.

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define the transduction aspect of the embodiment therein. Once the attachment server has removed the file attachment from the email message and then receives a retrieval request from the recipient, the attachment server will perform transduction on the attachment before providing it to the recipient. More specifically, the attachment server will either reduce the size of the attachment or stream the attachment to the recipient. When reducing the size of the attachment, the attachment server performs compression, generates a lower bandwidth version of the attachment or reduces the size or resolution of the image(s) contained in the file attachment.

One advantage of this is that the size of the attachments sent to the recipient is significantly reduced. As digital photos, videos and other media have become commonplace, the size of typical email attachments has grown substantially larger. Some techniques exist for removing the attachment from the email message and storing it elsewhere. However, usually, the recipient will still want to obtain the attachment at some point (typically download the attachment from another location). The attachment server of Claim 1 performs transduction on the attachment before providing it to the recipient by either reducing the size of the file attachment or by streaming it directly to the recipient. This can reduce the time taken to obtain an email attachment and the overall network traffic caused by these types of downloads.

The Hanna reference teaches a method for replacing an email attachment with an address specifying where the attachment is stored. Hanna describes a system that examines an email message to determine if an email contains an attachment. If the email does contain an

attachment, the system stores the attachment at a location on the network. The email message is modified by replacing the attachment with a reference specifying its location. The email is then sent to the recipient and the recipient uses the reference to retrieve the attachment (col. 2, lines 1-19).

Arnold teaches automated referencing of electronic information. More specifically, Arnold was cited as disclosing applying detachment rules to the email message. These “detachment rules include criteria for determining whether or not the attachment should be detached from the message... The criteria may include message size, number of recipients, type of recipient... and other configurable factors” (Arnold, col. 4, lines 9-17).

The newly cited Tsai reference teaches a facility for distributing and providing access to electronic mail message attachments. More specifically, the facility stores the attachments so that email messages can be sent without the attachments. The recipients may then review and/or download the attachments by contacting the facility.

Applicant respectfully submits that Hanna, even if combined with Arnold and Tsai (cited references), fail to disclose the features defined in Claim 1, as amended.

Specifically, the cited references fail to disclose performing transduction on the file attachment by the attachment server prior to providing the file attachment to the recipient, wherein said transduction includes reducing the size of the attachment or streaming the attachment to said recipient, as defined in Claim 1. This type of transduction is not disclosed.

In the Office Action, it was proposed that Tsai discloses transduction in columns 4, line 61 – column 5, line 8 and column 6, lines 30-57 (Office Action, p.5). These portions of Tsai describe a converter “for converting the attachments from a native format into an HTML format” (col. 6, lines 55-57). However, this is different from the amended features in Claim 1. As amended, Claim 1 defines that transduction includes reducing the size of the attachment or streaming the attachment to said recipient. Neither of these functions is performed in Tsai. Tsai does not appear to reduce the size of the attachment, nor does it stream the attachment to the recipient. As such, this feature is not disclosed in the cited references.

In addition, Claim 1 defines that reducing the size of the attachment includes one or more of: compressing the file attachment, generating a lower bandwidth version of the file attachment, and reducing the size or resolution of an image in the file attachment. This functionality is also not disclosed in any of the cited references.

For example, in the Office Action, the examiner alleged that Hanna discloses generating the low bandwidth version (Office Action, page 7, rejection of Claim 4). Applicant respectfully disagrees. The cited portions of Hanna only disclose 'encryption' but not any "lower bandwidth version of the attachment" as defined in Claim 1. For example, see "attachment may additionally be encrypted to provide additional security." (col. 5, lines 66-67) However, encryption is entirely different from reducing the size of the attachment file. Moreover, Hanna does not appear to mention that the attachment server actually performs transduction on the attachment after removing it from the email message and at the time of receiving a retrieval request, as defined in Claim 1. The general concept that "attachments may be encrypted to provide additional security" is well known in the art and is not the same as the transduction features defined in Claim 1, as amended.

Furthermore the cited references also fail to disclose the features of generating a lower bandwidth version of the file attachment, and reducing the size or resolution of an image in the file attachment, as defined in amended Claim 1. None of these features are mentioned in the cited references.

In view of the above comments and amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1, as amended, is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 5, 12 and 19

Claims 5, 12 and 19, while independently patentable, recite limitations that, similarly to those described above with respect to Claim 1, are not taught, suggested nor otherwise rendered obvious by the cited references. Reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-3, 6-7, 9-12, 14, 16-18 and 20-30

Claims 2-3, 6-7, 9-12, 14, 16-18 and 20-30 are not addressed separately, but it is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable as depending from an allowable independent claim, and further in view of the comments provided above. Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 2-3, 6-7, 9-12, 14, 16-18 and 20-30 are similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

It is also submitted that these claims also add their own limitations which render them patentable in their own right. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

IV. Additional Amendments

The present Response hereby adds new Claims 31-33. Applicant respectfully submits that new Claims 31-33 claim features which are not disclosed in the cited references. Consideration thereof is respectfully requested.

V. Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now pending in the subject patent application should be allowable, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested. The Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned if he can assist in any way in expediting issuance of a patent.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-1325 for any matter in connection with this response, including any fee for extension of time, which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

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